

# Purana Ghrita and its Therapeutic Implications in Neuropsychiatric Disorders

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## ABSTRACT

*Ghrita* is considered the best *sneha* among the four lipids. *Navina ghrita* is the one that is freshly prepared. After one year of preparation, this *ghrita* is known as the *Purana ghrita*. It may be tested for its chemical constituents, properties, adulterants, purity, etc. In Ayurveda, ghee is used for external as well as internal use. Externally, ghee is mainly used in *lepa*, *tarpana*, and internally, it is used as *anupana* or as a whole medicine. Ghee is used in many preparations in Ayurveda. *Snehapaka* are primarily prepared with *ghrita*. The present work aims at a review of the *purana ghrita* from an ayurvedic as well as contemporary perspective.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ghrita*, *Purana Ghrita*, *Ayurveda*, *Unmada*, *Nasya*, *Apasmara*

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## INTRODUCTION

*Ghrita* (clarified butter) is the finest among four lipid base medicine in Ayurveda. *Ghrita* has “*samskarasya anuvartana*” property, i.e., it has the ability to absorb more phytochemicals supplied during the *snehapaka* without sacrificing any of its own characteristics<sup>1</sup>. There are descriptions of *ghrita* being utilised as a food source for the digestive system in the Rigveda. The significance of *ghrita* and its utility as a medicine are described in Atharava Vedic literature<sup>2</sup>. *Ghrita*, in general, harmonises the *Pitta* and *Vata doshas* to *Rasa Dhatu*, *Sukra Dhatu*, and *Ojas*, it is *hitakara*. It has two properties: *Mrudukara* (ability to bring Softness) and *Nirvapana* (ability to lessen burning feeling). It clarifies things for *Swara* and *Varna*<sup>3</sup>. Acharya Sushruta also explains the qualities of the various types of *ghrita*. The key indications for *ghrita* include aggravated *vata* *pitta dosha*, *udavarta*, *unmada*, *apasmara*, *soola*, *jwara*, and *anaha*. *Timira*, *Swasa*, *Pinasa*, *Jwara*, *Kasa*, *Murccha*, *Kushta*, *Visha*, *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, etc<sup>4</sup>. all include references to the *Purana ghrita*. A sort of *Sarpi* that is only known to Acharya (Ghee preserved for 111

years) is the *Kumbha Sarpi*, which is helpful as *Rakshoghna*. If kept further, it is referred to be *Maha ghrita*, which is very helpful in *Timira*<sup>5</sup>.

## PURANA GHRITA

*Ghrita* becomes *purana* after a year of storage<sup>6</sup>. It has the following characteristics: *katu rasa* *katu vipaka*, *madamurcha*, *apasmara*, *unmada*, *garavisha*, *jwara*, *karnashula*, *yonishula*, and *sheerashula nashaka*. It is also used in *udara roga*, and *vrana*<sup>6</sup>. Charaka claims that *ghrita* that has been kept in an airtight container for ten years is *purana ghrita*. It has *ugragandha*, *katu rasa* and *tikta rasa*. The ten-year-old *ghrita* resembles *lakhsa*<sup>7</sup>.

1. Bhavamishra: A *ghrita* that is one year old is referred to as *purana ghrita*<sup>6</sup>.
2. Yogaratnakara: A *ghrita* that is 10 years old is known as a *purana ghrita*, whilst one that is 100 years old is known as a *kumbha ghrita*<sup>8</sup>.
3. Chakradutta: *Purana Ghita*, often referred to as *Kumbha Ghita*, is a 10-year-old *ghrita*. After that, it is known as *Prapurana Ghita*<sup>9</sup>.

4. Ashtanga hridaya arundutta tika: a purana ghrita which is 15 years old<sup>5</sup>.
5. Sushruta: Purana ghrita ranges from 1 to 10 years of age.
  - A. Kumba ghrita ranges in age from 11 to 100.
  - B. Ghrita became known as Maha Ghrita after 100 years<sup>10</sup>.
    - a. 1 yr old ghrita - abhishyanda & tridosha nasaka
    - b. 4 yr old ghrita- abhishyanda completely decreases
    - c. 5 yr old ghrita- kashaya rasa as anurasa
    - d. 10yr old ghrita- katu rasa and laghu
    - e. >10yr old ghrita- acts like rasayana.
    - f. Kumba ghrita- rakshaghna
    - g. Maha ghrita- sresta ghrita
1. Kaiyadeva Nigantu claims<sup>11</sup>
  - a. 1 year old: Purana Ghrita
  - b. Pra Purana Ghrita (10 years old; Laksharasa Sadrushya)
  - c. Khumba Ghrita, 100 years old
  - d. Mahaghrita > Kumbha ghrita (Sushruta), 111 years of age or older.

*Purana* and *prapurana* have the same effects as *amrutha* and can be applied to all karmas as well as *nasya*, *netrapurana*, *abhyanga*, *vasti*, and *pana*.

The only preparation in which purana ghrita is used, as stated in *unmada roga adbhikara*, is for *brahmi ghrita*<sup>12</sup>. All psychiatric illnesses can be treated with purana ghrita when taken alone or even daily with milk<sup>13</sup>. It may even be applied to *abhyanga*. Purana ghrita and numerous other *rakshoghna dravyas* were used in Sushruta's explanation of how to prepare ghrita, *abhyanga*, *nasya*, *vati*, and other foods in the *apasmara chikitsa*<sup>10</sup>.

*Purana ghrita* is prepared by heating ghrita to a lukewarm temperature, pouring it into a mud pot or glass container until it fills two thirds of the way, sealing the opening with a cloth covered in *multani mitti*, and burying it for one to ten years. At this time, it can be stored in a glass jar to prevent air exchange and ensure that the ghrita stays heated. Thus, *paka* occurs there and *samskara* of ghrita is thus achieved. It is capable of curing practically all psychiatric illnesses<sup>14</sup>.

**Table 1: Review of previous physico chemical study on Purana ghrita**

Parameters	Naveena ghrita	1 year old	15 years old ghee	Inference
Specific gravity	0.91	0.9336	1.07	Acceptable
Refractive index	1.459	1.45732	1.465	Acceptable
Iodine value	0.159	40.76	42.26	Acceptable
Saponification value	2.352	220.54	347.28	Acceptable
Acid value	1.62	0.38	75.88	Acceptable
Peroxide value	0	0.20	37.54	Acceptable

## DISCUSSION

The physico-chemical analysis aids in validating the thousands of years old claims made by Ayurveda. We can notice the rise in the iodine value, saponification value, and acid value from the table above. (Table 1)

**Refractive index:** The refractive index checks the purity of the samples. Here, we can see that the ghee stored for 15 years maintained its purity, and the samples were free of adulteration or impurities. This finding suggests that ghrita stored in anaerobic conditions for 15 years did not lose its innate quality, and we can also infer that such stored ghrita can be beneficial and therapeutically effective.

**Iodine value:** The iodine value corresponds to the degree of unsaturation. The higher the unsaturation, the greater the capability to transcend the blood brain barrier. Also, higher iodine signifies higher reactivity of the compound. The previous studies have established that traditionally prepared ghee has higher DHA. In the above-mentioned studies, we can see a great increase in values from 0.169 to 40.76 and

42.26. This finding suggests that as the ghee gets older, its degree of unsaturation increases. Also, a rich iodine value suggests high PUFA and its absorption into the brain.

**Saponification value:** The quantity of potassium hydroxide necessary in milligrams, to saponify one gram of fat under particular circumstances is known as the saponification value. As there are far less carboxylic functional groups per unit mass of fat than there are for short chain fatty acids, the long chain fatty acids found in lipids have a low saponification value. In the above samples saponification value increased from 2.352 to 220.54 and 347.28. It suggests that short chain fatty acids are definitely present in the sample. Shorter fatty acid chains are easier for the brain to absorb. As a result, the saponification value also suggests that purana ghrita definitely has beneficial effect on brain and as the ghee gets old, greater is the benefit in neuropsychiatric conditions.

**CONCLUSION**

Ghrita has been the source of nutrition since time immemorial. The fresh ghee has established its therapeutic utility in various psychosomatic conditions alone or in combination with polyherbs. Ayurveda psychiatry specifically recommends the use of old ghee in the management of psychosis. The physicochemical evidence has also established this claim. The studies have suggested that ghee, when stored in an anaerobic environment for one to fifteen years, enhanced its therapeutic value through higher absorption into the brain and higher short-chain fatty acids. This high level of unsaturated short-chain fatty acids suggests that purana ghee has greater capability to transcend the blood-brain barrier. Further, the mechanism of this absorption may be meticulously studied.

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